

Congregational Meeting

May 31, 2020

1:00pm ET

Present: Ray Santiago, Wendy Miller Olapade, Joanna Begin, Erin Sennott, Liz Douglass, Branwen Cook, Gini, Fraelean, Julie Roberts, Paul Roberts, Lisa Parker, Tom Gerstenlauer, Aaron Olapade, Terri Bracy, Carvina Williams, Joy Harris, Bruce Roberts, Paul Sennott, Jeff Smith, Charlene, Kathy Williams

Joanna read the call to the meeting.

Dear Sanctuary UCC Members and Partners,

You are called, and your presence and participation are faithfully requested at a Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for Sunday, May 31 at 1:00 am via Zoom Meeting; the access for which is listed below.

Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, the conditions under which all are living and operating, and the recent decision by the Leadership Circle (guided by recommendations issued by the CDC and SNEUCC) that we will not physically gather at least through Labor Day; the LC proposes the following agenda:

1. Vote to move the 2020 Sanctuary Visioning Meeting (normally “held between March and June”) to be held between August and November;
2. Vote to move the 2020 Sanctuary Annual Business Meeting (normally held “no later than the first Sunday of July”) to be held no later than the first Sunday of December;
3. Vote to extend for the six month period of July 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020 for the purpose of Sanctuary operations: Click links for the 2020 budget and list of leadership.
 - a. a. the current 2020 operating budget (currently approved by congregation for the period 2019.07.01 – check 2020.06.30); and
 - b. the current 2020 elected church leadership (currently approved by congregation for the period 2019.07.01 – 2020.06.30)

Wendy prayed.

Paul Roberts moved to move the 2020 Sanctuary Visioning Meeting (normally “held between March and June”) to be held between August and November. Fraelean seconded. Joanna opened the floor for discussion. No discussion. Paul moved the question. All in favor. None opposed. None abstained.

Paul Robers moved to move the 2020 Sanctuary Annual Business Meeting (normally held “no later than the first Sunday of July”) to be held no later than the first Sunday of December. Terri Bracy seconded. Joanna opened the floor for discussion. Paul Roberts asked if the assumption is that the Annual Meeting in December would be addressing six month remaining of this fiscal

year? Joanna said that is correct. The Annual Meeting will be discussing the second half of the fiscal year. Joanna clarified that we are not moving our fiscal year; we are asking for an extension. Kathy Williams asked if this extends the budget. Joanna said that will be the next vote for the meeting. All in favor. None opposed. No abstentions.

Paul Roberts moved to vote to extend for the six month period of July 1, 2020 through Dec 31, 2020 for the purpose of Sanctuary operations. Fraelean seconded. Joanna opened the floor for discussion. Kathy Williams said there are a number of things in the 2020 budget that aren't valid anymore, such as with personnel. In the past, personnel money has been spent in a way that was different than the initial intent. For example, Alex received a raise, and the LC didn't have to ask the congregation if that was approved. Kathy would like a level spending moving forward. She doesn't want anybody on the church staff to receive additional hours or money moving forward. Joy also expressed questions about this issue. Joy asked if AM2PM is happening this summer. Wendy said it's not happening this summer, since we can't organize it in a safe and responsible way. Wendy will be in further conversations with leaders to do momentary investment since we have a grant from the Mass Humanities. We received an extension from the state to use those funds. Joy asked if it's possible to make adjustments in the budget for the rest of the year. Joanna explained that the Susan Corso position is currently an open position, so if we find a candidate, we'd fill it. Erin said the budget discussion is supposed to be at a later date, not now. Kathy is opposed to pushing discussions/changing the budget until December. Branwen said there's a chance we might need to increase a staff member's hours due to specific needs during the pandemic. Branwen doesn't think we should tie our hands with something like holding our spending. Wendy said the Discernment Team has begun to meet again, and the next few months we're seeking to discover what's called of us during this unprecedented time. The potential for more effort is staring us in the face, yet she understands the anxieties from members. One of the roles that hasn't been filled is specifically associated with our finances in hiring someone to build out our stewardship and fundraising capacities. The LC can take under advisement the wisdom that we need to be careful and thoughtful in the ways we move forward. The congregation will be hearing from the Discernment Team regarding a plan to move forward. **It's in the LC's authority to make these decisions. Joanna said the bylaws (#5), the LC oversees the business responsibilities, and #9 states the LC is responsible for hiring, firing, etc.** The LC is being as careful as we can right now, but she doesn't think it's in our best interest to change our budget right now. Kathy asked for a "gentleman's agreement" that we won't hire any new staff. Joanna said the congregation voted the LC in place to oversee these things. Nobody knows what church will look like in the next several months, and she's uncomfortable stating we won't make any new hires. Kathy thinks the LC should ask the congregation. Terri said if we start down this road, then we no longer have a need for an LC, and everything will come to a vote. Joy said we have a very small congregation, so we wouldn't have a hard time with these types of things. With the uncertainty moving forward, things could change dynamically. Joy can't believe we'd need to hire yet another person. She doesn't see why we couldn't go to the congregation for this. Joanna said then at that point, we'd need to change the bylaws to reflect this. Also, it takes 2 weeks to make a call for a congregational meeting, which is a long time in terms of recruiting. Fraelean believes we have this setup with

the bylaws and LC for a reason, and she supports what we have in place today. In December, we can have a conversation to change this. She does not want to discuss this now. Paul Roberts said we can't have an under the table agreement as stated for the call for this meeting. Paul moved the question. All in favor for moving the vote forward ; 3 opposed; no abstentions. All in favor - ; opposed - 3; no abstentions.

Joann thanked everyone for attending and participating.

Wendy closed the meeting in prayer.